



1ST SATURDAY DEVOTION NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2020

LENT AND THE PATH TO FREEDOM: AN EXCERPT

By Georgy

www.turnbacktgod.com

Doing Battle with the World, the Flesh and the Devil.

God does not need Lent, we do.

Jesus being tempted in the Desert

When I was a young man in College I had a priest friend who I now recall every time we begin the Forty Day Observance of Lent. About a week before Ash Wednesday he would say, "I am looking forward to Lent." The comment would perplex me greatly. In fact, I was dreading Lent, thinking it to be an onerous time with a lot of external practices which I did not really understand.

In my 20-year-old mind, mistakenly thinking as most 20 year olds do that I knew everything, I would dismiss the comment from my priest friend as some sort of "weird piety." Now, decades later, I find myself joined with my old friend, seeing the wisdom of his well-formed piety. I welcome this remedial season of grace in my life. Now that it has come, I pray that I can enter into its invitation and find the path to Freedom. God does not need Lent, we do.

This ancient practice of setting aside 40 days in order to enter – in Jesus – into the desert places in our own daily lives and confront the temptations and struggles we face is a gift. It comes from the Lord and is offered through the Church who is our mother. We all know the truth and need to be honest, particularly so during Lent as we examine our lives in the light of the call to repentance. We all struggle with disordered appetites and unconverted ways of thinking and living.

We also demonstrate in our daily lives a lack of charity in our relationships with others. We have developed unhealthy habits which cause us untold sadness and impede our progress in virtue. None of these set us free or help us to flourish as human persons. They are the bad fruit of sin. The Desert of Lent is where we learn to conquer in the One who both shows us the Way and is Himself the Way.

Lent is a Gift

Lent is a gift given to us by the Lord, but we have to unwrap it and apply its remedial and healing prescriptions. The Lord in whom we now live through Baptism, is Risen from the Dead. He is walking through time now, in his Body, the Church. He wants to save us and set us free as we live our lives in that new world which is the seed of the Kingdom to come. However, as another priest friend of recent acquaintance regularly reminds his parish, "Lent won't work unless you work it!"

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FEASTS FOR MARCH

The feasts on the General Roman Calendar celebrated during the month of March are:

- 3 Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Sunday
- 4 Casimir of Poland, Opt. Mem.
- 7 Perpetua and Felicity, Memorial
- 8 John of God, Opt. Mem.
- 9 Frances of Rome, Opt. Mem.
- 10 First Sunday of Lent, Sunday
- 17 Second Sunday of Lent, Sunday
- 18 Cyril of Jerusalem, Opt. Mem.
- 19 Joseph, husband of Mary, Solemnity

- 23 Turibio de Mogrovejo, Opt. Mem.
- 24 Third Sunday of Lent, Sunday
- 25 Annunciation of the Lord, Sunday
- 31 Fourth Sunday of Lent, Sunday

The feast of St. Katharine Drexel (March 3), is superseded by the Sunday liturgy. ☐

THANK YOU

... a small and simple phrase that comes from a grateful heart!

Psalm 106:2

<p><u>Las Vegas, Nevada</u></p> <p>2000 Hail Devotion March 21, 2020</p> <p>Ines Carrington & Guada Eugenio</p>	<p><u>Los Angeles, California</u></p> <p>800 Our Father Devotion March 21, 2020</p> <p>Adriana Arguello April Araneta Myles & Edith Avanzado Gerrard & Denise Gier Frank & Beth Lim Alice Ng</p>
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OUR CENACLE CORNER

*Seeking a deeper relationship with God
through meditation of passages from Holy Scriptures*

JOY, HAPPINESS AND ABUNDANCE

GENESIS
SAMUEL
PROVERBS

GOD TOUCHED ME

MYSTERIOUS ARE THE WAYS OF THE LORD

By C. Rosario

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
– Psalm 46:1*

*If we make our sorrow and trouble an occasion of learning more
of God's love and of His power to aid and bless,
then it will teach us to have a firmer confidence in His providence;
and as a result of this, the brightness of His love will fill our lives.
– Billy Graham*

Several members of my family have either gone on a pilgrimage and/or are members of the Spiritual Army. I went on my first pilgrimage, the one that took place in Kentucky, because I wanted to meet the people with whom my mom and relatives have been spending their weekends with and also to find out what the Spiritual Army is all about. Everyone was extremely warm and welcoming and I could see why my mom and family keep returning to the group.

What I have learned from my December 2019 pilgrimage is that God changes people's lives by giving people the support they need when they need it in various ways even when we do not ask for it; and also the power of prayer and surrender to God's will.

Throughout our trip, I heard variations of stories about people who were experiencing hardships, needed guidance, either were sick or had a family member who was sick, struggles with bearing children, making the right job or relationship related decisions, and the common theme among them was that they prayed their intentions or petitions to God or Blessed Mary and then surrendered and left it in their hands. What they got in return was a sense of peace. A great example that happened even before I met the Spiritual Army is my aunt who many years ago we thought we were going to lose because she needed a liver transplant. We had so many false alarms where she was close to getting one but something caused a delay or more tests were needed. But whenever I asked my aunt how she was doing or what was the next step, in this long, complicated process, she would just smile at me and say something along the lines of everything is or will be fine because I am just leaving it up to God. If it is God's will then it will happen. Both she and the people I met on this journey seem to start out with something heavy and burdensome in their lives but after they surrender their struggle or question whatever it may be to God or Mother Mary, the ending of their stories was a sense of peace.

I believe God helps us in mysterious ways even when we are not asking for His assistance for I have experienced this. January 19 was the fourth-year death anniversary of my father and God gave me caring next door neighbors to help me cope with his loss. Although at the time I had not seen them in a while, it was my neighbors who called me at work to let me know my dad was sick. The children of the families on our street have moved out but still come back to visit their parents. My childhood neighbors' three sons who always looked out for me as if I was their sister, visit their mom on a regular basis. During these times, their mom makes huge family dinners for them not because there is a special occasion but just a way for them to stay in touch and spend time together. After my dad passed on, I stayed at my mom's house several nights a week for months and these same neighbors invited my mom and me to their weekly family dinners. I never would have survived the loss of my father without attending those dinners. They kept me from feeling lonely and would sometimes take my mind off the sadness of our loss by bringing up fond memories of my dad and our childhood.

Four years after my father's demise, starting in October, unfortunately, I have had multiple friends in my life suffer the loss of a loved one. Two of them lost their father, and I find myself empathizing, trying my best to be there for all of them, and offering words of comfort that come with sincerity from having been through it. So, I feel like in some mysterious way, God sent people to be there for me and my mom when we needed it and now it is time for me to do the same. ☐

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RECOMMENDED

SEEKING INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS THROUGH THE BIBLE

BY VICTOR ARANETA

THE ARTICLES IN THIS COLUMN HAVE BEEN COMPILED INTO A BOOKLET AND WILL BE LAUNCHED SOON. WHEN AND HOW YOU CAN GET A COPY WILL BE ANNOUNCED. ☐

I am your Mother Mary. You have seen the signs in the sky from coast to coast, countries to countries. Pray, pray, pray, my children. God has forewarned you. God is merciful and loving. God is pleased on some of your works on the unborn. But still, there is total disregard on babies and children by the very powerful sectors of society. Pray, pray, pray, my children. Invoke the passion of my Son Jesus and pray the beads of my rosary, and prepare. In the end, the righteous will triumph and w i i i i i i i n!

Mary, Your Lady of the Rosary
02022020

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**PASSING OF THE CROSS
STATIONS OF THE CROSS
SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2020**

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CENACLE
& POTLUCK BREAKFAST
MASS BEGINS AT 8:30 AM
CONVENT OF THE SISTERS DISCIPLES
OF THE DIVINE MASTER
LOS ANGELES, CA

**CELEBRATION OF
SAINT PEDRO CALUNGSOD
SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2020**

CONVENT OF THE SISTER DISCIPLES
OF THE DIVINE MASTER

**FEAST OF THE
DIVINE MERCY
SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2020**

IN LOS ANGELES:
1:45 PM
THE MONASTERY OF THE ANGELES
1977 CARMEN AVENUE ON GOWER
LOS ANGELES, CA 90068

IN LAS VEGAS:
2:30 PM
ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
CATHOLIC CHURCH
1111 MICHAEL WAY, LAS VEGAS

**MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT RETREAT
OCTOBER 16, 17 AND 18, 2020**

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE CHURCH
CHINO HILLS, CA
PLEASE E-MAIL DENISE AT
DENISE.G@SPIRITUALARMYOFGOD.ORG
FOR REGISTRATION DETAILS

LENT AND THE PATH TO FREEDOM

Lent invites us to journey in Jesus, into the Desert. It is there, in that pace of struggle, the field of engagement, where we can learn the root causes of our challenges and be equipped with the weapons of our warfare to fight what the Scriptures and Tradition refer to as the "world, the flesh and the devil." The "world" in this meaning is NOT referring to the created order. Rather, the "world" refers to the system which has squeezed the primacy of the Creator out of daily life. When we succumb to its seduction we give ourselves over to the idolatry of self.

The "flesh" is not our body – which God fashioned and which will be raised from the dead, made glorious by the Resurrection. Remember, the Word became flesh and was raised BODILY from the grave. Jesus was the "first fruits" and we too will be raised in Him. Rather, the "flesh" refers to the disordered appetites which are one of the bad effects of sin at work within us.

The "devil" is not some figment of our imagination, but a malevolent fallen angel who, just as He tempted our first parents and tempted the Lord, now tempts us. These 40 Days of Lent are a classroom in which we learn to conquer the "world the flesh and the devil" so as to live differently, beginning now.

Temptations Jesus Faced

The first temptation Jesus faced was to His identity. After all, he IS the Son of God! We, through our Baptism, have also now become Sons (and daughters) of the Father in Him. The next temptation was to idolatry. We regularly commit the horrid sin of idolatry, succumbing to its lies almost on a daily basis. Finally, there was the subtle but deadly temptation to violate integrity, to use the gifts and power of God improperly and put the Lord to the test. How clearly this poisonous serpent lurks in our daily life!

In each of these encounters with the Tempter, Jesus shows us the method by confronting the lies of the truth of God's Word. He is the Living Word, and we, through

our Baptism, now live our lives in Him. That is why I say we enter the desert IN Him. We do this by living within the communion of the Church which is His Risen Body on earth. The Church is not some-thing but Some – One.

We are invited during these 40 days to take every gift, every grace, offered to us. We are invited to learn to wield the weapons of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. By these practices we grow in freedom by putting away the "old man/woman" and putting on the "new man/woman", created anew in Jesus. It is Jesus in his Sacred Humanity who fully reveals that new man. He is the model, showing us the method. However, in His Divinity He is Himself the Means. In Him we are redeemed. We are also capacitated to grow in holiness and virtue by overcoming temptation. Through His Saving Life, Death and Resurrection, he makes it possible for us to live new lives, in Him – beginning now and leading into eternity.

Going into the Desert of Lent

In his homily on Ash Wednesday in 2010, Pope Benedict XVI said: "That long time of silence and fasting for him was a complete abandonment to the Father and to His plan of love. Going into the desert meant voluntarily exposing himself to the enemy's attacks, to temptation, entering into battle with him on the open field, defying him without any weapon other than his infinite trust in the Father's omnipotent love.

"Adam was expelled from the earthly paradise, the symbol of communion with God... Now, in order to return to that communion and thus to eternal life we must pass through the desert, the test of faith. Not alone but with Jesus who proceeds us and who has already conquered in the fight against the spirit of evil. Each year, Lent invites us to renew our decision to follow Christ on the path of humility in order to participate in his victory over sin and death".

Let us choose to enter into the desert, in Jesus. Let us welcome Lent by embracing its way of voluntary sacrifice, of fasting, prayer and almsgiving. Lent is a path to Freedom. □